515 holy place, and even today children are warned against making too much noise while bathing. [844] In earlier times most babies were born in the sauna--a wise precaution, for the sauna is practically germ-free. Certainly the sauna has contributed much towards the traditional cleanliness of the people. It has been a valuable asset for Finnish sportsmen, and through them it has become known throughout many parts of the world. Finnish emigrants have brought the idea with them to their new homes, and in Scandinavia as well as in North America one often encounters a typical Finnish sauna.

857 526 By force of circumstance, Finnish children become familiar from a very early age with skiing, rowing and swimming, and they also have opportunities to become experts at the

traditional games of wrestling, running, tug-of-war, sack-racing and various ball games. A real interest in sports in general, however, did not arise until the beginning of this century, especially after the spectacular success of Finnish long-distance runners and other athletes in the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912. The most popular sports in Finland are the ball games, i.e. soccer, ice-hockey and the national form of baseball, after which come skiing, track and field, gymnastics, swimming, path-finding, wrestling and boxing, cycling and skating. Track and field, in which Finland held second place after the United States in all the Olympic Games until the London event in 1948, are the special favorites of the public, and the large international competitions gather a large

461 Its a whole work is held in great esteem in Finland. A farmer is judged according to the state of his fields and his barns rather than on the basis of an impressive looking house or fancy agricultural machinery. The Finns have a reputation for being good workers, although after the recent war the situation has left [851] plenty of room for improvement. On the farms the children become accustomed to hard work from an early age, as hired help is hard to get 462 and too expensive for small land-owners. The heaviest burden, however, falls on the housewife. The position of women in Finland is traditionally free, although the wife's share of work often is quite unproportional, and the husband and wife together make their decision on important matters. The fields and the horses are the farmer's responsibility, while the wife